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Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the promotion of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies

Summary

In its resolution 66/253, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a comprehensive report on the promotion of equitable geographical distribution of the membership of the human rights treaty bodies. In response to that request, the present report provides information on the system for the election of treaty body members and an analysis of the current membership of each treaty body, by geographical region.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 66/153, the General Assembly encouraged the States parties to the United Nations human rights instruments to consider and adopt concrete actions, inter alia, the possible establishment of quota distribution systems by geographical region for the election of the members of the treaty bodies, thereby ensuring the paramount objective of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of those human rights bodies. In the same resolution, the Assembly urged the States parties to the United Nations human rights instruments, including the bureau members, to include this matter in the agenda of each meeting and/or Conference of States Parties to those instruments in order to initiate a debate on ways and means to ensure equitable geographical distribution in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies, based on previous recommendations of the Commission on Human Rights and the Economic and Social Council and the provisions of the same resolution. The Assembly also recommended, when considering the possible establishment of a quota by region for the election of the membership of each treaty body, the introduction of flexible procedures that would encompass the following criteria: (a) each of the five regional groups established by the General Assembly must be assigned a quota of the membership of each treaty body in equivalent proportion to the number of States parties to the instrument that it represents; (b) there must be provision for periodic revisions that reflect the relative changes in the geographical distribution of States parties; and (c) automatic periodic revisions should be envisaged in order to avoid amending the text of the instrument when the quotas are revised. The Assembly stressed that the process needed to achieve the goal of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of human rights treaty bodies could contribute to raising awareness of the importance of gender balance, the representation of the principal legal systems and the principle that the members of the treaty bodies should be elected and should serve in their personal capacity, and should be of high moral character, acknowledged impartiality and recognized competence in the field of human rights.

2. The Chairpersons of the human rights treaty bodies were requested to consider, at their next meeting, the content of resolution 66/153 and to submit, through the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, specific recommendations for the achievement of the goal of equitable geographical distribution in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies, as well as an update on the implementation of the resolution by their respective bodies. The High Commissioner was requested to submit concrete recommendations on the implementation of the resolution and the Secretary-General was requested to submit a comprehensive report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

3. The present report is submitted in response to that request and provides an analysis of the current composition of the membership of the human rights treaty bodies.

II. Human rights treaty bodies

4. Nine of the ten international human rights treaties provide for the creation of a committee of experts to carry out the functions delineated in the treaty and, where relevant, its optional protocols. Accordingly:

(a) The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, established under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, began work in 1970;

(b) The Human Rights Committee, established under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, began work in 1977 and is invested with functions by the Covenant and its two Optional Protocols;

(c) The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, established under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, began work in 1982 and is invested with functions by the Convention and its Optional Protocol;

(d) The Committee against Torture, established under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, began work in 1987;

(e) The Committee on the Rights of the Child began work in 1991 and oversees implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its three Optional Protocols;[1]

(f) The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, established under the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, began work in 2004;

(g) The Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, established under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, began work in 2007;

(h) The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, established under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, began work in 2009; and the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED), established under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, began work in 2011.

5. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights does not provide for the creation of a treaty body but gives the Economic and Social Council a general mandate to oversee the implementation of the Covenant by States parties and United Nations specialized agencies through the consideration of reports. In 1978, the Council created the Sessional Working Group of Governmental Experts on the implementation of the Covenant to assist it in considering the reports submitted by States parties (decision 1978/10). The composition of the Sessional Working Group was amended by the Council in 1985 (resolution 1985/17) and it was renamed the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Committee, which is treated as a treaty body, first met in 1987. Subsequently, the Human Rights Council has called for the regularization of the Committee so that its establishment is consistent with other treaty bodies (resolution 4/7).

[1] The third Optional Protocol to the Convention, the Optional Protocol on the Individual Communications, is envisaged to enter into force with the 10th ratification of the Optional Protocol.

III. Election of members of the human rights treaty bodies

6. With the exception of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, whose elections are governed by Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/17, the elections of members of treaty bodies are governed by provisions set out in each treaty (art. 8, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; arts. 28-34, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; art. 17, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; art. 17, Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; art. 43, Convention on the Rights of the Child; art. 72, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; arts. 5-9, Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; art. 34, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and art. 26, International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance).

7. In accordance with these provisions, each Committee is composed of independent experts, ranging in number from 10 to 23, with provisions for an expansion of the membership being included in several treaties (up to a maximum of 14 under art. 72, para. 1 (b) of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; up to a maximum of 25 under art. 5, para. 1, of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and up to a maximum of 18 under art. 34, para. 2, of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities).

8. Experts are nominated and elected by States parties to the treaty concerned by secret ballot. They serve for four-year terms, and, except in the case of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which allow for the renomination of members only once, the treaties do not limit the number of times a member's term may be renewed. With the exception of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which allow for the nomination of two candidates by each State party, all treaties limit the number of nominees to one. Candidates must be nationals of the nominating State party, except in the case of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which entitles States parties to nominate a candidate who is a national of another State party where it nominates two candidates. The other candidate must be a national of the State party, and before it nominates a national of another State party, the nominating State must obtain the consent of the other State party (art. 6).

9. Where the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is concerned, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1985/17, provides that the Committee shall consist of 18 members who shall be elected by the Council by secret ballot from a list of persons nominated by States parties to the Covenant. Members serve for four-year terms and are eligible for re-election if nominated. The elections of members in respect of all other treaty bodies are held at biennial meetings of the States parties, or in the case of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, at a Conference of States parties of the treaties concerned. In all cases, in order to avoid

the change of the entire membership, the terms of half of the members elected at the first election are limited to two years, following which elections occur every two years.

A. Qualifications for nomination as members

10. The qualifications expected of nominees, set out in the treaties and in Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/17, vary. In general, members are required to be of recognized competence and of high moral standing and acknowledged impartiality. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights also indicates that consideration should be given to the usefulness of the participation of some persons having legal experience (art. 28, para. 2), while the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment provides that, in nominating candidates, States parties should bear in mind the usefulness of nominating persons who are also members of the Human Rights Committee and who are willing to serve on the Committee against Torture (art. 17, para. 2). The Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment indicates that members should have proven professional experience in the field of the administration of justice, in particular criminal law, prison or police administration, or in the various fields relevant to persons deprived of their liberty (art. 5, para. 2). In the case of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, States parties are invited to give due consideration to article 4, paragraph 3, when nominating candidates (art. 34, para. 3). This requires States parties to closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the development and implementation of legislation and policies to implement the Convention and other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities. All treaties and Council resolution 1985/17 indicate that members should serve in a personal capacity.

B. Criteria for election of members

11. The treaties and Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/17 provide criteria for States in election of members of treaty bodies. In all cases, consideration must be given to equitable geographical distribution. Additional considerations include representation of the principal legal systems (Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities); the different forms of social and legal systems (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights); different forms of civilization (Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities); different forms of civilization and legal systems of the States parties (Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment); and legal experience (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment).

12. The newer treaties provide explicit provisions relating to gender balance. Thus, in the composition of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, due

consideration is to be given to "balanced gender representation on the basis of the principles of equality and non-discrimination" (art. 5, para. 4). Where the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is concerned, States parties are also required to give consideration to balanced gender representation and participation of experts with disabilities. The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance also requires due consideration to be given to balanced gender representation (art. 26, para. 1).

13. Allocation of membership on a regional basis applies only in the case of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, with Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/17 providing that 15 seats on the Committee will be equally distributed among the regional groups, while the additional 3 seats will be allocated in accordance with the increase in the total number of States parties per regional group.

C. Replacement of members

14. All treaties contain provision for the replacement of any members who resign or die before the end of their term. In most cases, the State party that nominated the former member appoints another expert from among its nationals to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term, subject in certain cases to the approval of the relevant treaty body (Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Committee on the Rights of the Child and Committee on Migrant Workers). In the case of the Committee against Torture, this is subject to the approval of other States parties. Replacement in these cases has no impact on the existing geographical distribution of the committee concerned. However, article 34 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights requires vacancies on the Human Rights Committee to result in a new round of nominations and elections, provided at least six months are left before the expiration of the term. Although this may result in a change in the geographical composition of the Committee, in practice, the nationality of the member has changed only once on the occasions when members of the Committee have been replaced, with the replacement being from the same regional group as the original member.

IV. The five regional groups

15. According to an unofficial list compiled on the basis of the practice of States in elections at the General Assembly (see annex), the current composition of the regional groups recognized by the General Assembly is:

African States	54 States
Asian States	52 States
Eastern European States	23 States
Latin American and Caribbean States	33 States
Western European and other States	29 States
Not members of a regional group	2 States
Total	**193 States**

16. The practice of certain States with regard to regional groups differs for the purposes of elections and for other functions. Thus, for the purpose of elections, Turkey votes with the Western European group although it is also a member of the Asian group.

17. The Cook Islands, the Holy See and Niue are parties to one or more of the treaties but are not members of the United Nations.

V. The five regional groups

18. Currently, 172 individual experts from 86 countries are serving as a member of the treaty bodies. The membership of each treaty body varies, ranging from 10 to 23 (see table 1).

Table 1
Membership of human rights treaty bodies

Committee	*Membership*
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	18
Human Rights Committee	18
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	18
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	23
Committee against Torture	10
Committee on the Rights of the Child	18
Committee on the Rights of Migrant Workers	14
Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture	25
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	18
Committee on Enforced Disappearances	10
Total	**172**

A. Current status of geographical distribution of membership of treaty bodies

19. The current status of the geographical distribution of the membership of the human rights treaty bodies indicates that the Western European and others group (WEOG) is the biggest, with 47 members (27.3 per cent), followed by the African group, with 39 members (22.7 per cent); the Asian group, with 30 members (17.4 per cent); the group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC), with 33 members (19.2 per cent); and the Eastern European group, with 23 members (13.4 per cent) (see table 2).

20. Relative to the level of treaty ratification by member States per regional group, it appears that the African and Asian groups are underrepresented in the membership while WEOG is overrepresented. The representation of GRULAC and the Eastern European group in the membership of the treaty bodies appears to be proportionate to the level of ratifications.

Table 2
Geographical distribution of membership of treaty bodies

Region	*Number of members (per cent)*	*Number of ratifications (per cent)*
Africa	39 (22.7)	451 (27.6)
Asia	30 (17.4)	377 (23.1)
Eastern Europe	23 (13.4)	228 (14.0)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	33 (19.2)	298 (18.2)
Western European and others	47 (27.3)	270 (16.5)
Non-member States	–	9 (0.6)
Total	**172 (100.0)**	**1 633 (100.0)**

21. The geographical distribution of membership relative to the level of treaty ratification, when examined by committee, indicates that (see table 3): (a) on the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, WEOG is overrepresented; (b) on the Human Rights Committee, the Asian group is much underrepresented and WEOG is overrepresented; (c) on the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the African group is underrepresented and GRULAC and the Eastern European groups are overrepresented; (d) on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, WEOG is overrepresented and the African group is underrepresented; (e) on the Committee against Torture, WEOG is overrepresented; (f) on the Committee on the Rights of the Child, WEOG and the Eastern European group are overrepresented; (g) on the Committee on the Rights of Migrant Workers, GRULAC is underrepresented relative to its proportion of ratifications; (h) on the Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture, the African and the Eastern European groups are underrepresented; (i) on the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, WEOG and GRULAC are overrepresented and the African and Asian groups are underrepresented; and (j) on the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, WEOG and the Asian group are overrepresented.

Table 3
Ratifications and membership of each treaty body, by regional group
(With percentage of total)

	Membership	*Ratification*
	Number (percentage)	
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination		
Last election of members held on 3 June 2013[a]		
Total number of membership and ratifications	18	176
Africa	5 (27.8)	51 (29.0)
Asia	3 (16.7)	40 (22.7)
Eastern Europe	2 (11.1)	23 (13.1)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	3 (16.7)	32 (18.2)
Western European and others	5 (27.8)	29 (16.5)
Non-member States	–	1 (0.5)

	Membership	*Ratification*
	Number (percentage)	
Human Rights Committee		
Last election of members held on 6 September 2012		
Total number of membership and ratifications	18	167
Africa	5 (27.8)	51 (30.5)
Asia	1 (5.6)	35 (20.9)
Eastern Europe	2 (11.1)	23 (13.8)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	3 (16.7)	29 (17.4)
Western European and others	7 (38.9)	29 (17.4)
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights		
Last election of members held on 26-27 April 2012		
Total number of membership and ratifications	18	160
Africa	4 (22.2)	48 (30.0)
Asia	4 (22.2)	35 (21.9)
Eastern Europe	3 (16.7)	23 (14.4)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	4 (22.2)	27 (16.9)
Western European and others	3 (16.7)	27 (16.9)
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women		
Last election of members held on 26 June 2012		
Total number of membership and ratifications	23	187
Africa	5 (21.7)	51 (27.3)
Asia	6 (26.1)	51 (27.3)
Eastern Europe	3 (13.0)	23 (12.3)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	3 (13.0)	33 (17.6)
Western European and others	6 (26.1)	28 (15.0)
Non-member States	–	1 (0.5)
Committee against Torture		
Last election of members held on 18 October 2011[6]		
Total number of membership and ratifications	10	153
Africa	3 (30.0)	43 (28.1)
Asia	1 (10.0)	34 (22.2)
Eastern Europe	1 (10.0)	23 (15.0)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	1 (10.0)	23 (15.0)
Western European and others	4 (40.0)	29 (19.0)
Non-member States	–	1 (0.7)
Committee on the Rights of the Child		
Last election of members held on 18 December 2012		
Total number of membership and ratifications	18	193
Africa	4 (22.2)	52 (26.9)
Asia	4 (22.2)	54 (28.0)

	Membership	*Ratification*
	Number (percentage)	
Eastern Europe	3 (16.7)	23 (11.9)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	2 (11.1)	33 (17.1)
Western European and others	5 (27.8)	28 (14.5)
Non-member States	–	3 (1.6)
Committee on the Rights of Migrant Workers		
Last election of members held on December 2009[c]		
Total number of membership and ratifications	14	46
Africa	6 (42.9)	17 (37.0)
Asia	2 (14.3)	8 (17.4)
Eastern Europe	1 (7.1)	3 (6.5)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	4 (28.6)	17 (37.0)
Western European and others	1 (7.1)	1 (2.2)
Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture		
Last election of members held on 25 October 2012		
Total number of membership and ratifications	25	68
Africa	2 (8.0)	12 (17.6)
Asia	4 (16.0)	8 (11.8)
Eastern Europe	5 (20.0)	18 (26.5)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	7 (28.0)	14 (20.6)
Western European and others	7 (28.0)	16 (23.5)
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities		
Last election of members held on 12-14 September 2012		
Total number of membership and ratifications	18	131
Africa	3 (16.7)	34 (26.0)
Asia	3 (16.7)	31 (23.7)
Eastern Europe	2 (11.1)	21 (16.0)
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	4 (22.2)	24 (18.3)
Western European and others	6 (33.3)	20 (15.3)
Non-member States	–	1 (0.7)
Committee on Enforced Disappearances		
Last election of members held on 28 May 2013		
Total number of membership and ratifications	10	38
Africa	2 (20.0)	9 (23.7)
Asia	2 (20.0)	4 (10.5)
Eastern Europe	1 (10.0)	5 (13.2)

	Membership	*Ratification*
	Number (percentage)	
Group of Latin American and Caribbean States	2 (20.0)	14 (36.8)
Western European and others	3 (30.0)	6 (15.8)

[a] Members who were newly elected in June 2013 will start to serve as a member of the Committee from January 2014; accordingly, a change in the membership through the last election is not reflected in the present report.
[b] Next election of members to be held on 1 October 2013.
[c] Next election of members to be held on 5 December 2013.

B. The current status of gender-balance in membership of treaty bodies

22. Female treaty body members constitute 40 per cent of the total membership of the treaty bodies, with 69 members out of 172. With the exception of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the statistics illustrate that the membership of treaty bodies is still male-dominated (see table 4). It is also noteworthy that the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has only 1 male member out of 23 members and more efforts should be made to improve a gender balance in the Committee.

Table 4
Gender composition of treaty bodies

Committee	*Total*	*Female*	*Male*
		(percentage)	
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	18	3 (16.7)	15 (83.3)
Human Rights Committee	18	5 (27.8)	13 (72.2)
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	18	4 (22.2)	14 (77.8)
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	23	22 (95.7)	1 (4.3)
Committee against Torture	10	4 (40.0)	6 (60.0)
Committee on the Rights of the Child	18	11 (61.1)	7 (38.9)
Committee on Migrant Workers	14	4 (28.6)	10 (71.4)
Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture	25	8 (32.0)	17 (68.0)
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	18	7 (38.9)	11 (61.1)
Committee on Enforced Disappearances	10	1 (10.0)	9 (90.0)
Total	**172**	**69 (40.1)**	**103 (59.9)**

VI. Conclusion

23. **Under the terms of the nine human rights treaties and an optional protocol that establish a treaty body, the modalities for the nomination and election of treaty body members is a matter for States parties. Where the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is concerned, the nomination of candidates for election is a matter for States parties, whereas election is a matter for the members of the Economic and Social Council, with geographical distribution being subject to Council resolution 1985/17.**

24. **The Secretary-General reminds States parties that the equitable geographical distribution of membership is essential for the effective functioning of the treaty bodies. In that regard, he recommends that States parties step up efforts to ensure equitable geographical representation in the treaty bodies, including by setting up regional quotas for members in equivalent proportion to the number of States parties to the treaty in question, similar to United Nations models that allocate seats to the five regional groups. The Secretary-General recommends that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights include, in the documentation prepared for elections of treaty body members by meetings of States parties, an overview of the current situation in that treaty body in terms of geographic and gender balance.**

25. **More specifically, the Secretary-General recommends that States parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which allows for the nomination of two candidates by the State party, take into consideration the principle of equitable geographical distribution of the membership of the treaty bodies when nominating a candidate who is a national of another State party.**

26. **The Secretary-General also recommends that States parties ensure the equal representation of women and men in the human rights treaty body membership through their considerate nomination of candidates and voting.**

27. **The Secretary-General further recommends that the present report be forwarded to the chairs of the meetings or conferences of States parties, as well as to the Economic and Social Council, for the consideration by those forums at their next meetings.**

Annex

Regional groups

The statistics contained in the present report were calculated on the basis of the following regional groups. Membership of the regional groups is not fixed and this list does not constitute official recognition of their composition.

African States (54 States)

Algeria
Angola
Benin
Botswana
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroon
Cape Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros
Congo
Côte d'Ivoire
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Djibouti
Egypt
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Gabon
Gambia
Ghana
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Kenya
Lesotho
Liberia
Libya
Madagascar
Malawi
Mali
Mauritania
Mauritius
Morocco
Mozambique
Namibia
Niger
Nigeria
Rwanda
Sao Tome and Principe
Senegal
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Somalia
South Africa
South Sudan
Sudan
Swaziland
Togo
Tunisia
Uganda
United Republic of Tanzania
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Asian States (52 States)

Afghanistan	Myanmar
Bahrain	Nauru
Bangladesh	Nepal
Bhutan	Oman
Brunei Darussalam	Pakistan
Cambodia	Papua New Guinea
China	Philippines
Cyprus	Qatar
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Republic of Korea
Fiji	Samoa
India	Saudi Arabia
Indonesia	Singapore
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Solomon Islands
Iraq	Sri Lanka
Japan	Syrian Arab Republic
Jordan	Tajikistan
Kazakhstan	Thailand
Kuwait	Timor-Leste
Kyrgyzstan	Tonga
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Turkmenistan
Lebanon	Tuvalu
Malaysia	United Arab Emirates
Maldives	Uzbekistan
Marshall Islands	Vanuatu
Micronesia (Federated States of)	Viet Nam
Mongolia	Yemen[a]

Eastern European States (23 States)

Albania
Armenia***
Azerbaijan***
Belarus
Bosnia and Herzegovina****
Bulgaria
Croatia****
Czech Republic*
Estonia***
Georgia***
Hungary
Latvia***
Lithuania***
Montenegro
Poland
Republic of Moldova***
Romania
Russian Federation***
Serbia and Montenegro****
Slovakia*
Slovenia****
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia****
Ukraine

Latin American and Caribbean States (33 States)

Antigua and Barbuda
Argentina
Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Costa Rica
Cuba
Dominica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
El Salvador
Grenada
Guatemala
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras
Jamaica
Mexico
Nicaragua
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Saint Kitts and Nevis
Saint Lucia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Suriname
Trinidad and Tobago
Uruguay
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Western European and other States (29 States)

Andorra
Australia
Austria
Belgium
Canada
Denmark
Finland
France
Germany**
Greece
Iceland
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Liechtenstein
Luxembourg
Malta
Monaco
Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Portugal
San Marino
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Turkey
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United States of America

Not members of a regional group

Kiribati
Palau

Note: Both Palau and Kiribati are included in the Asian Group for the purposes of the present report, notwithstanding that they do not formally adhere to this group.

Total: 191 Member States

States parties that are not members of the United Nations

Cook Islands[b]
Holy See[c]
Niue[b]

Defunct former States parties

Czechoslovakia*

German Democratic Republic**

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics***

Yugoslavia****

Notes

* Czechoslovakia ceased to exist on 1 January 1993, on which date the Czech Republic and Slovakia, as successor States to the former Czechoslovakia, considered themselves bound by the multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General to which Czechoslovakia was party. Both States are within the Eastern European Group.

** The German Democratic Republic acceded to the Federal Republic of Germany on 3 October 1990, resulting in one less State within the Eastern European Group.

*** The Russian Federation, as of 24 December 1991, maintained full responsibility for the rights and obligations of the USSR under the multilateral treaties deposited with the Secretary-General. The territory which formerly constituted the USSR, entirely within the Eastern European Group, is now represented by the Russian Federation and 12 other independent States, seven within the Eastern group (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Republic of Moldova) and five within the Asian group (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). Belarus (as the Byelorussian SSR) and Ukraine (as the Ukrainian SSR) were each founding members of the United Nations in their own right.

**** The following States succeeded to the treaty rights and obligations with effect from the dates indicated previously undertaken by the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Bosnia and Herzegovina (6 March 1992), Croatia (8 October 1991), Serbia and Montenegro (27 April 1992), Slovenia (25 June 1991) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (17 September 1991). The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia ceased to exist upon the independence of these five successor States.

[a] On 22 May 1990, the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen merged to form the Republic of Yemen. Between 6 April 1989 and 22 May 1990, both States were parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, resulting in an increase in the number of States parties in the Asian group.

[b] Cook Islands and Niue are self-governing territories in free association with New Zealand. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was applied by New Zealand to the Cook Islands and Niue at the time of its ratification of the Convention on 10 January 1985. The Secretary-General, as depositary of multilateral treaties, recognized the full treaty-making capacity of the Cook Islands in 1992 and of Niue in 1994. Both States are parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Currently, the Cook Islands and Niue are not parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in their own right. For the purpose of this study, both States are included with the other Pacific States in the Asian group, notwithstanding that New Zealand is part of the Western group.

[c] The Holy See has observer status at the United Nations and is a party to three human rights conventions: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention against Torture and Convention on the Rights of the Child. It does not adhere to a regional group.